

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA) issued the following statement after voting No on H.R. 4310, the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA):

"I support a strong national defense and our men and women in uniform, but unfortunately I could not in good conscience support the House-version of the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act. H.R. 4310 failed to realistically address the pending sequestration of Defense spending scheduled to take effect in January 2013, and it failed to remove the dangerous detention provisions enacted last December in the FY12 NDAA.

"I opposed an amendment adopted by the House that replaces the Defense sequester by assuming enactment of the FY13 Republican Budget and subsequent reconciliation bill. This would only further squeeze other vital functions of government and lead to cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. Budgeting is about choices and this amendment, like the Republican Budget, chooses to further cut programs that support America's middle class and our most vulnerable citizens, while at the same time also extending trillions of dollars in tax cuts that primarily benefit the wealthiest Americans. I believe we should allow these tax cuts to expire first before we even consider cutting Defense, Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.

"I supported an amendment offered by House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Adam Smith, which would have removed the detention provisions from the FY12 NDAA to guarantee that the U.S. government would not be able to indefinitely detain persons arrested on U.S. soil without a charge or a trial. Instead the House adopted an amendment that only affirms a citizen's constitutional right to challenge the legality of their detention, but does nothing to actually remove these provisions from the FY12 NDAA.

"Finally, in an effort to improve the bill and promote American jobs, House Democrats in their final opportunity to amend the bill, offered a motion that would have required all U.S.-flagged military ships be repaired in U.S. ports, with appropriate exemptions for national security and urgent repairs. I voted in favor of this amendment which would have enhanced our national security, promoted our highly-skilled shipbuilders in Hampton Roads, and ultimately saved the American taxpayers money. We should be utilizing the best workforce in America to help maintain and repair the mightiest and most advanced naval fleet in the world. Unfortunately, all but two House Republicans voted against this commonsense amendment."

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